



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

June 30, 1981

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 81-28 (711)

SUBJECT: Coordination of Communications from Local Management to National Union Headquarters or National Vice-Presidents

To: Personnel Officers

One of the national unions has established a new strategy in requesting negotiability determinations. The national union headquarters, rather than the local union, requests a negotiability determination direct from local management. One of their reasons for doing this, is to screen cases to avoid adverse negotiability precedents and to select those cases which best enhance the union's objective of widening the scope of bargaining. The law and FLRA regulations set forth a 15-day appeal time frame for the union to seek a negotiability decision from the FLRA. The 15-day time frame normally starts when the union is served with management's written response to the union's written request for a negotiability determination. In one Interior situation, a direct response to the national union headquarters by local management may have reinstituted a negotiability appeal after the time period for seeking a negotiability determination had already expired.

The matter of local management responding directly to the national union headquarters or national vice presidents poses several problems: (1) it jeopardizes timeliness issues as described above, (2) it potentially sets precedent against management throughout Interior or the Federal Service, and (3) it establishes an adversarial situation when the issue may be a known negotiable matter.

Therefore, in order to avoid these problems when communications are received locally from the national union headquarters or a national vice-president, (especially concerning negotiability issues) copies must be sent immediately to the Bureau Labor Relations Officer and the Department (Chief, Division of Labor-Management Relations). All responses to national unions will be coordinated with the Bureau Labor Relations Officer and the Department. It is important to note that failure to respond to the union only permits the union to appeal the matter and does not waive any management rights or positions.

Acting Director of Personnel

INQUIRIES: Harry Givens, Jr., Chief, Division of Labor-Management Relations,  
Room 5226, ext. 6754

DISTRIBUTION: Bureau Headquarters and Field